

First – Third John

Bible Commentary 2021

by

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First John

Chapter 1

1:1

John described Jesus as "*the Word of life*". He is the Word made flesh. John said they saw him, looked upon him, and touched him. This was a personal witness of Jesus Christ. John did not share abstract facts. He did not teach religion. He described someone he saw, touched, and listened to.

The eyewitness of John of the Lord Jesus is central. John was a witness of the life, ministry, teaching, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. He told us Jesus Christ is eternal life. Anyone who has the Lord Jesus has eternal life. If we do not have the Lord Jesus we do not have eternal life.

John and the other disciples saw Jesus. They believed the testimony of the Lord Jesus and the testimony of the Holy Spirit. They were convinced of who Jesus is.

Jesus said to Thomas, "*because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*" (**John 20:29**)

Today we do not see with our eyes but we believe. We believe the testimony of John: Jesus is the Son of God and he is the Word of God. He is eternal life.

We see with spiritual eyes, by faith: Jesus is who John said he is. Anyone who denies the testimony in John's letter is calling God a liar.

I do not want to call God a liar. I believe the witness and testimony: Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is who John said he is. He is eternal life.

1:2

Eternal life, Jesus, the Father, and fellowship are all intertwined into one idea. Much like who God three in one is. He is one God revealing himself to us in time in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit. This is not modalism. He is eternally and always three in one, unchanging, eternally the same God who is three in one and one in three.

This God manifested himself in our world and became a man: the Lord Jesus Christ. John gave us his testimony that he saw him, touched him, heard him, and witnessed his acts. It is our choice to accept or reject this testimony. However, our faith or unbelief does not change the historical facts and truth.

John called the Lord Jesus "the life" and "that eternal life" in this verse. Jesus also referred to himself as "life". **John 14:6**, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* He is "the life". This life is eternal. If a man does not have this life he will die and experience eternal death which is complete separation from "that life".

Eternal life is a person so it is impossible to have "eternal life" outside of a relationship with him. Since he is eternal life then it is only by faith in him and a relationship with him we can also experience eternal life. **John 15:6**, *"If a man abide not in me (Jesus), he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."*

Separation from eternal life, from Jesus, is described as being "burned". This is the fate of every person who rejects the Lord Jesus and turns their own way. Eternal death. This is not unfair. It is reality and it is the truth.

Jesus was with the Father and then he came into the world from the Father. He said this to his disciples, to the public, and to his enemies on several occasions which were recorded in scripture. After he rose from the dead he ascended back to his Father. He is now at the right hand of God the Father. He is returning again in the future at a specific date and time to this world. His feet will set down on this earth again.

We should prepare now for his return. We should prepare for the inevitable time when we will stand before his judgment seat and give account of our lives. We can prepare for this now by turning from self, sin, Satan, and this world system and by putting our entire faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Read **Romans 10:9-10, Romans 6:23**.

1:3

Adam and Eve enjoyed unbroken fellowship with God when they were in the garden of Eden. After Adam's disobedience and the fall of man this fellowship was broken. Sin separates us from fellowship with God. When we are removed from fellowship with God we are removed from the life of God which is eternal life. What we get in the place of eternal life is eternal death.

It is God's will for us to have fellowship with him and live with him forever. It is not God's will for any man to perish. This is why the Lord Jesus came into this world and died on the cross in our place. Through his death, burial, and resurrection he made a way for us to return to a right relationship with God. Now we can draw near to God by faith in the completed work of the Lord Jesus.

The apostle John saw and heard the Lord Jesus. He was there to hear the Lord Jesus teach and he saw the miracles, he witnessed the crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and the ascension of the Lord Jesus. His purpose in writing this letter was so others also could have fellowship with him, with his fellow believers, and with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ.

The only way to have a relationship which lasts forever is to base that relationship on agreement with God. By agreeing with God and putting our faith in Jesus we have a relationship and fellowship with God. After this, we can always have fellowship with others who also agree with God and believe in Jesus. For those who turn their backs on the Lord Jesus there can be no fellowship. It is not like the Christian does not desire to fellowship with his family who are unsaved. It is just practically impossible. There is no common ground. The spirit of unbelievers move in the opposite direction from the believer. There can be no fellowship. There is only superficial conversations about the temporary and fading world system.

There is no joy which can compare to fellowship with God. After this fellowship there is also no joy which can compare to genuine fellowship between believers who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. There is no joy which I have ever known like the joy of fellowship with God and with fellow believers in Christ.

1:5-7

The apostle spoke with the authority of receiving a message directly from God. What he communicated, then, was truth directly from God. What was the message? God is light.

There is no darkness in God. God is light. Those who cast doubt on God's character blaspheme someone who is completely without guilt. God is light. In him there is no darkness at all.

The words darkness and light have a moral sense and a literal sense. God is perfectly moral though his level of morality is so superior to ours it cannot be understood properly by those whose only point of reference is darkness. Our point of reference is sin and darkness. We cannot grasp the infinite light of God's goodness, holiness, and perfection.

However, we can agree with John's testimony: God is light. He is absolute. Since God is absolute light then the absolute exists. There is absolute light. There is no darkness and no compromise with this light.

Those who attempt to dampen the light of God by teaching compromise lead others astray with error. We should never compromise the truth that God is light. He is holy. He is perfect. As a result of who God is there are moral absolutes which do not change. It does not matter what men believe or do not believe. It does not matter how men may try to twist or interpret scripture. God is light. This will never change. He will never change. He will not bend or change himself to conform to the darkness of men.

Since we are prone to darkness how can we walk in the light with God? If it is impossible for us to be morally perfect how can we walk in the light? How is it possible for us not to always walk in the darkness?

We do this through agreement. We agree with God that he is light. We agree with the testimony of John. We agree. When we agree with God that he is light then we also walk in the light. It is only when we stop believing the truth about who God is that we lie and walk in darkness.

When we walk in agreement with God then we have fellowship with him and this enables us to have fellowship with one another. While we live in these fallen human bodies we are prone to temptation

and sin. John addresses this in the following verses. However, human nature does not stop us from agreeing with God that he is light. We can agree with God that he is light and that he does not change. God is absolute. We take God's side against ourselves, our culture, our society, our nation, and our entire world system. We take God's side. We agree that God is light. He is absolute. Absolute exists. Then we also can walk in the light.

When we disagree with God's testimony we no longer are in the light but are now walking in the lie. We do not know the truth. When we disagree with God then fellowship with others is broken. We end up alone. Separated from everyone and from God. This is hell. Unending, unbroken darkness, isolation, and the pain that brings.

I want to walk in the light. I want to agree with God. I have made my decision to believe God's word no matter who disagrees and no matter what the entire world says. I have made my decision to walk in the light.

God is light. In him is no darkness.

1:8

Mans' capacity to deceive himself began with Adam and Eve. Eve was deceived by the serpent but afterwards deceived herself. Adam deceived himself by taking the forbidden fruit from his wife. How were they deceived and how did they deceive themselves?

They were deceived when they stopped believing the truth. The truth they knew was the word which God spoke to them: "Eat this and you will die". God is life and separation from him is death. When they disobeyed God they broke fellowship with him. When this fellowship broke they no longer had God's life but existed.

Deception and delusion go hand in hand with death. Adam and Eve attempted to minimize what they did when God confronted them. They attempted to explain what they did by pointing the finger to someone or something else. This is the lie of saying we have no sin. When we decide not to take responsibility for our own actions and decisions then we deceive ourselves. We cannot have the truth and live a lie at the same time. It is impossible.

Darkness and deception clouds the mind when we say we have not sinned. Because we have sinned. Every single one of us has sinned. We are born sinners. When we enter this world we are sinners. Read **Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Isaiah 64:6**.

It is not good when a Christian defends himself from correction, criticism, or accusation. Instead, we should imitate Christ when he was accused. He did not defend himself, but left all judgment to his heavenly Father.

One reason we should not defend ourselves is that it points to a symptom in the believer's heart. We are saying we have not sinned. But we have sinned. We are wrong. Only God is right. We must agree with God that he is right and we are wrong. Read **Romans 3:23**.

When we agree with what God's word says we can avoid delusion. We escape darkness and deception by agreeing with God. We are wrong and he is right. A man may feel like he is right and should defend

himself but it is better not to. It is better to be quiet and allow the Lord to take care of it. Don't allow the habit of defending yourself to become part of your character and who you are. It leads to deception.

One hard thing to accept is that all men are in darkness. All men are liars. This is really hard for men to believe. It is hard to believe we can be so wrong. But we are. Without the light of God and His Word we are in complete darkness and deception.

I thank God he sent his Son into the world to shine his light and give us the truth. I am thankful for John and his testimony that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

1:9

Here is a promise in God's word every Christian should memorize and keep ready. This single promise from God's word saved me from my own foolishness. Many times. More than I can count. This is a precious promise in God's word.

If we confess our sins God is faithful and forgives our sins. He cleanses us from ALL unrighteousness. Praise God, he makes me clean, pure, holy. How does he do it? He listens when I confess my sins. He hears and he promises he will forgive and cleanse me.

How can God be just and yet forgive me? How can I commit sin and not pay the consequences for my sin? Because God promised he forgives me if I confess my sins. Jesus paid the price on the cross.

He does this because of what Christ Jesus did through his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus made the way through his shed blood that I can be forgiven of all my sins if I simply confess them to God.

Forgiveness may not seem like a big deal to the unbeliever. However, whether or not he realizes it the unbeliever has a conscience which causes him pain. It pains him at least until he succeeds in searing it to the point he can no longer feel the pain. A believer can be relieved of the pain in his conscience by confessing his sins to God and receiving immediate forgiveness and cleansing. This is possible because of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian is free from shame and guilt of sin, failure, and mistakes. He lives life with his head held up, confident that he is clean and pure. He does not have to doubt God's love because he has this precious promise.

There are times I went back to this verse every day because of sin. Once in awhile the enemy puts the thought into my head "Don't you think God is getting tired of hearing you whine about your sin all the time?" That stopped me in my tracks and caused me a moment of dismay until I remembered the promise in **1 John 1:9**. God's word never changes. If God gave this promise then I can rest assured he never gets tired of hearing me confess my sins to him. He never fails or gives up on me. He sent his only Son Jesus to die on the cross for me! Why would he give up on me now? I refuse to listen to the lies of the devil. I am clean, I am pure, and I am made right with God. I confessed my sins to God. He forgave me and cleansed me. I have nothing to worry about.

Isn't this the greatest thing you have ever heard?

It is for me. I know how prone to failure I am and how easily I fall into sin. I know, however, when I confess my sins to God he hears and he forgives. He doesn't do this because I beg and plead with him. He does it because he said he would. He never goes back on his word and his promise.

Chapter 2

2:1-2

John teaches us not to sin. We should remember Christ did not save us so we could go on in sin but instead live a righteous life. The goal is to be holy even as the Lord is holy. Read **Romans 6:1-2**.

John allowed if a man did sin it is not the end of the world. We have a way we can be made right with God again. **1 John 1:9** tells us we can confess our sins to God and receive forgiveness. John showed us how this is possible. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and he lives to make intercession for us. (**Hebrews 7:25**).

A propitiation for sins means someone purging sins. We see this presented in scripture in the sacrificial systems of Israel. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice and the final and complete sacrifice for sins. He is the propitiation for our sins. A propitiation is an atoning sacrifice. Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. He paid the price at Calvary when he was crucified, died, and was buried. He rose again on the third day demonstrating God accepted his sacrifice. He is now at the Father's right hand as our high priest forever.

Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for believers but also the sins of the whole world. The idea that Christ only died for the elect of God is exposed as error. The apostle John teaches Jesus died not only for believers but for the sins of the whole world.

We must turn away from any man-made system of theology and turn our hearts to the living God. Jesus is a real person and not a religious system or philosophy. His word is spirit and life. It is not dead religion. I've seen the effects of religion and don't want any part of it. My heart cries out for a sincere and simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is eternal life. He that has the Son of God has life.

Theology is useful for teaching the Bible but we should not put more emphasis on systems than we do upon the Lord Jesus. A vibrant love for Jesus is more important than all of our systematic theology. Every time we put God in a box he bursts out with a simple verse of scripture like this one. Jesus died for us who believe and also for the whole world who do not believe. He died for all. It is not God's will for any man to perish but that all come to repentance.

2:3-6

Obedience to commandments is often confused as a path to salvation when that is not what John or James taught us. These letters show us what a life of faith looks like. These are descriptions of a life of faith. When anyone looks at a Christian they see someone who keeps God's commandments and who does good works. Saving faith in Jesus produces the fruit of an obedient life filled with good works.

This does not mean salvation is obtained by striving to keep God's commandments or by trying to cancel sin by good works. These statements on keeping God's commandments do not provide salvation or eternal life. Instead, it shows us what a man filled with the Holy Spirit acts like.

As there was in the early church there are people who claim to be Christians in order to gain a foothold in the church for their own selfish motives. Some people like to infiltrate groups in order to gain position or prestige or monetary advantage. John says you can tell who is a genuine Christian by the fruit in their lives. Is this man obeying God's commandments? If he says he is a Christian but lives in unrepentant sin then you know he is a liar. He is not really a Christian.

A Christian lives like Jesus lived. The Christian is obedient to the heavenly Father, he is humble, he is quick to love and forgive. He is slow to anger and wrath. He is glad to help others. He loves his neighbor and his enemies. He is ready to do good. He is not overcome by evil but overcomes evil by doing good.

Jesus abides in his heavenly Father and could point to his life and works as evidence of his walk with his heavenly Father. The Christian should be able to do the same. We should by our good life testify and witness that we abide in Christ Jesus.

So there is no confusion: John does not provide the way a person earns salvation or eternal life. Instead, he demonstrates what someone who is saved acts like in their daily life.

2:9-11

John returned to the statement "God is light and in him there is no darkness at all". He showed us if we are children of God then we also live in the light of God. However, if we have our doctrine correct and we are diligent in good works but do not love our brother in Christ then we fail. It is not enough to believe the right things about God but we also must love our brother in Christ. If we do not love our brother in Christ then we are in darkness and not in light. Here we see John tied the abstract ideas of light and darkness to the practical life of the Christian in how he treats others in the church.

God is light and there is no darkness in him. This shows us absolute truth. If we have this correct and confess God is light but show indifference and apathy towards our brother then the confession is empty and hollow. Our words must match our heart and our actions. There is no room left for empty professions of faith. If a man is truly walking in the light then he also walks in love. This teaching is repeated by Paul in **1 Corinthians 13**.

John makes an interesting statement about those who walk in darkness. He said the man walking in darkness "*knoweth not whither he goeth*".

Man in pride and unbelief thinks he knows how to navigate life but he doesn't realize he is blind. He really does not know where he is going.

People who live in unbelief take their cues from the pyramid of the world system. They base their lives on survival, self interest, provision, and protecting themselves. This is easily seen in the emphasis men put on titles, position, money, and power. This is a lot of hard work.

The kingdom of God is exactly the opposite of this. The kingdom of God is about losing one's life for Jesus and the gospel. It is about being more interested in Christ than ourselves. It is about God providing for and protecting us. This is a much easier yoke to carry through life. Read **Matthew 11:28-30**.

Jesus taught about blind men who fall in a ditch. In the context Jesus spoke about this the conversation was with religious leaders of his day (**Matthew 15:14**). Blindness to motives is not constrained to those in the arenas of government or business, but also affects those serving their communities in a religious capacity. Each area of the world system infects people with the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh. These diseases blind men and fill them with darkness. (Compare also **Matthew 6:22-23**).

Why would one brother hate another brother in the church? Why did Cain have hatred for Abel? We would do well to search our hearts for idolatry, covetousness, and unbelief. These are some of the roots which lead to hatred and murder.

2:15-17

The world is passing away. It is in a state of corruption and decay, like a piece of roadkill swelling up and stinking beside the highway. This world system is too far gone. There is no stopping the downward spiral of this world we live in. It is inevitable that it will wind down and disappear into the twilight of eternity.

Do I want to invest in such a world which is temporary and transient? Most people do. It is all they know so even if it is fading away they pour their heart and soul into it. It won't last. It is an investment with no return.

Mankind is in love with the transient and temporary and with the illusion of this present world system. He loves what is in it. He loves the power, the position, and the pride. The devil has deceived mankind into living for the here and now. The cry of Satan is to live your best life now. It is a lie of the devil to focus on this life and not consider the end of it all.

Read what Solomon said in **Ecclesiastes 7:2**. Also, read what Moses said in **Psalm 90:12**.

It is a good thing to meditate upon the end of life because it will be here quickly. We should use what time we have to invest in eternity and not in the transient emptiness of this present world system. The devil has so many blinded into wasting their lives and sacrificing everything at the altar of money, position, power, and pride. It is really a tragedy to think of all the men who will grow old and too late realize their lives were wasted on their lusts, on their covetousness, on their idolatry.

If we pay attention to what God's word says we learn not to love the world or the things which are in the world. The evil spirit of the world consists of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. These are the three areas where the serpent hit Eve. These are also the three areas of temptation Satan attempted to seduce the Lord Jesus. These are the three areas which comprise the heart and soul of the world system.

The outward machinery of the world system is government, business, and society. I draw a parallel between these three areas and the three areas of evil and temptation. The lust of the flesh points to the area of government. The lust of the eye points to business. The pride of life points to society.

The world system is Satan's inversion of who God is. God is three in one. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is prophet, priest, and king. He is Israel, church, and the kingdom. The inversion of who God Three In One is points to this world system of government, business, and society.

We are currently in the day of the church. Previously we were in the day of Israel. Soon we will be in the day of the kingdom. These are three days and they are one. None of these replaces the other for in each of these three days resides a remnant of true believers who are true Israel, the spiritual church, and the kingdom. All three are one and exist forever. However, within time are revealed chronologically and in order so we can understand who God is. These are the three persons in one God.

Remember the three elements in the ark of the covenant. "*Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;*" (**Hebrews 9:4**) This verse lists the three days of God: the kingdom, the church, and Israel.

Currently we are in the day of the priest and intercession. The next day which is upon us is the day of the kingdom and authority. Those who are overcomers in Christ Jesus receive the hidden manna. (**Revelation 2:17**) This hidden manna is there in the ark of the covenant. It is the third element and also the third day. It is kingdom authority.

Also in **Revelation 2:17** it describes a stone given to us with a name on it which no one knows except the Lord and the one who receives it. This speaks of a relationship with the Lord where the believer is not under any man-made system of authority. He is not under any other man's name anymore. He is free to serve the Lord Jesus alone. He only responds when he hears the Lord call his name. Have you ever heard Jesus call your name?

The world system cheats a man out of the hidden manna and it cheats a man out of receiving a name from the Lord. Instead, the world system teaches a man to use the power of the world system, which is building one's own name and seducing people into submitting to one's own name through money and manipulation. The world system teaches a man to exalt himself and his own name or the name of his business. This is the path of darkness and leads away from the kingdom of God.

Don't invest in this present world system which is passing away. Instead, invest in what will count for eternity. Invest life, energy, and heart into the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in sharing the good news to as many who will listen.

2:18

You have heard Antichrist shall come. I heard this from my early childhood and not just at church or in Sunday School. My father took me to movies a lot when I was a child and one movie we saw was about a young boy who grew up to become the Antichrist. That movie freaked me out. It impressed me that there was this mystery I should look into.

Eventually I discovered that the Bible taught that a man will arise in his own name and the entire world will follow him. He comes in his own name. That is a clue to what kind of man he is and what kind of spirit drives him. Paul taught about this Antichrist and also the Lord Jesus mentioned him. Read **John 5:43**.

Scripture passages where Paul mentions Antichrist are in **2 Thessalonians: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-12.**

These scriptures paint a specific picture of this Antichrist man of sin. Also, the book of revelation has a lot to say about him as well. Read **Revelation 13:1-9.**

These are not the only places in the Bible that refer to the Antichrist. He is also described in Daniel's prophecies of the last days. There is no doubt that as we approach the end of this age the Antichrist and the world system will rise. I believe we are seeing a surge in the rise of this system right now like never before in history. It cannot be much longer until this man of sin takes the world stage.

However, I am not looking for Antichrist to come. Instead, I am waiting for the return of my King, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Lord will destroy this Antichrist when he returns in power and glory. That is the day I am looking forward to. The days of this world system and its Antichrist are short lived indeed.

My prayer is for God's kingdom to come upon this earth, and for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

2:22-23

Anyone who denies the Father and Son is a liar and an Antichrist. Jesus Christ is God's Son. Sadly, the majority of the world, including most religions, deny the Son of God. Some religions make a real point of denying God has a Son. They write it on their temples and proclaim it on a regular basis. Anyone who dies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is a liar and an Antichrist.

If someone denies that Jesus Christ is the only way to God then they are a liar and an Antichrist. People who deny that Jesus Christ is the only way to God are liars and Antichrists. If anyone agrees with these liars they also are liars and Antichrists.

We must verbally, vocally, and forcefully rebuke and correct anyone who says Jesus Christ is just one way to God. He is the only way to God! He is the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ. (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12**)

If someone denies the Father and the Son, no matter how much they talk about God, they do not know him.

Jesus confronted people who claimed to know God but did not.

People pretend to be religious but if they do not believe Jesus is the only way to God then they have no clue who God is.

Liars are not just liars because they tell a lie. People don't just tell lies. They are living a lie. Their life is a lie. They are controlled by the lie of the devil. They are held in bondage to the lie because they have rejected the truth.

As soon as a person rejects the truth they immediately accept the lie. There is the truth and there is the lie.

What awaits anyone who denies the truth of Jesus Christ is hellfire. People hate to hear about where they are going. They do not believe it. Of course they don't believe it. They are walking in darkness and in the lie. Only someone walking in the light and in agreement with God can believe the truth.

The truth cannot be understood by an unbeliever. When someone told me they read the Bible and did not understand it I replied, "Of course you don't! You cannot understand the Bible unless you stand under it. You must be willing to submit to the truth before you can understand it."

Here are some scriptures to help with this: **2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 1 Corinthians 2:14.**

We still live today in a time of God's grace. We are in the valley of decision. People can still repent and find the truth of God.

However, a horrible time is coming when all those who have not received a love of the truth believe a great delusion. There is a great delusion and lie coming which will ensnare the entire world.

I'm seeing this lie unfold in America. How close are we until the end? I ask this question a lot these days. Read **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.**

Decide once and for all that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. Don't turn aside anymore to false religions and systems of philosophy which deny Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Do not listen to the lie that there are other ways to God and other ways to be happy and successful in life. You may be happy right now but what about eternity? It will be here before you know it.

2:24-25

What they heard from the beginning was the plain gospel: Jesus was crucified and shed his blood for our sins. He died, he was buried, and he rose again the third day. He ascended into heaven and is now at the right hand of God. He lives there forever making intercession for us. He is returning again at some definite point in the future to this earth. The gospel is this: Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. Read **Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.**

Notice John uses the word "if". He says "if" you continue to abide in what you have heard from the beginning. If a man keeps in his heart and mind the gospel then he continues to be in Christ and in the Father. However, what happens if a man forgets? What happens if he neglects this great salvation? What happens? In my experience, God has been gracious to keep reminding me and drawing me back. The Lord corrects me many times to bring me back to remembering his message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Is it possible to refuse to listen to God's correction? We know from scripture it is possible for men to stop listening to God and turn away. We see this throughout scripture where men who once knew God turned away from him. Some of them God was able to correct and bring back. Others hardened their hearts when they were corrected and would not listen.

From my understanding the key to abiding and continuing in Christ is to be willing to receive correction from the Holy Spirit and from scripture. This is a grace from God also. Man is naturally resistant and rebellious towards correction. However, over time I've learned to appreciate correction

and rebuke from him. Now I understand it is a sign of God's love for me when he convicts, corrects, and rebukes me.

The only way to continue to abide in the word of Christ is to accept the "hard" word when it comes. Beginning at **John 8:31** read carefully the conversation which Jesus has with those who were following him.

He tells them, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed..."*

Continuing in the word of Christ means accepting what Jesus is saying right now, at this moment, today. It does not mean what you accepted years ago at an altar.

What are you accepting right now, today? Who are you agreeing with? Are you in agreement with unbelievers? Then you have stopped abiding and continuing in God's word.

As soon as you turn away from the plain word of God which you already know then you have stopped abiding. You have ceased to continue.

Jesus called those who followed him the children of the devil because they did not accept his word at that moment. When Peter did not receive the word that the Lord would go to the cross then Jesus rebuked him and said "get behind me Satan". When we reject the word of the Lord Jesus we immediately become subject to Satan. If you reject the word of truth then you have automatically accepted the word of the liar. Read **John 8:44-47**.

When we deliberately disobey God's word which we previously acknowledged as truth then we betray the Lord Jesus. You cannot separate God's word from the person of the Lord Jesus. He is the word of God.

To continue in the Lord Jesus we must accept his word. We must abide in the gospel which we heard when we were saved. We were saved by believing the gospel. We must continue to believe the gospel every day. We cannot neglect this great salvation. We cannot decide to take a day off from being a Christian.

Especially in the season we are currently living in it is vital to stay all the way on the Lord's side. Compromise a little and the aggressive evil in society will sweep you away. There is a riptide of evil which is pulling people right and left out into an ocean of darkness. It will continue to worsen until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read **2 Timothy 3:1-5**.

We are living in the last day described by Paul. It is here. Now is the time to remember the word from the Lord Jesus Christ in **Luke 21:28**. Lord Jesus, return to us quickly.

2:26-27

I worked at a ministry teaching new Christians. I remember a student came up to me outside class and gave me this scripture: *"ye need not that any man teach you"*.

I realized what he was implying by showing me this. He didn't need me to teach him anything. He was probably five years older than me and had a hard time accepting someone younger instructing him. I

understood his feelings and was at a loss for words to explain this to him properly so I just let it go. I continued to pray for him and for God to show me how to help him.

Finally the Lord showed me the following verses: **Ephesians 4:11-13**. I'm happy to say when I showed this scripture to him he received it graciously and we became good friends.

Scripture always helps us to understand scripture. By comparing scriptures and also by putting scripture in the right context we have a better understanding of what the Holy Spirit is teaching us. John did not say teachers are not needed in the church. Was he not himself teaching them through this letter? In the context of John's letter he said this because he was warning them about false teachers who were attempting to seduce them and lead them astray from the gospel they were originally taught by the apostles.

He wrote these things because of those who were trying to seduce the church. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit and God's word. We should never take what any man says without verifying and cross checking it against the Bible and what the Holy Spirit teaches us. If what a preacher says does not line up with the Bible we know the man is a false teacher.

The Bible commended the Bereans for searching the scriptures daily to see if what Paul preached was true. Read **Acts 17:11**. The Holy Spirit is our primary teacher. He instructs us in the word of God. We listen to him as he teaches us. Jesus said the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth and brings back to our mind everything Jesus said. Read **John 14:26**.

Since the beginning there were seducers infiltrating the church with false teaching. Some become powerful with positions in mega churches. We do not receive anything men say without searching the Bible for ourselves. We ask the Lord to show us if what men teach is true or not. By staying humble and accepting correction we can avoid deception.

The anointing John mentioned was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in a believer's life is the anointing. The word "anointing" is abused in American churches by people who emphasize the Holy Spirit in Bible teaching. We should not throw out the truth of the anointing just because some in the church abuse this word. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is real. It enables us to learn the truth and to abide in the truth. The anointing of the Holy Spirit enables us to be humble and teachable. It helps us keep an open heart when corrected by God's word. It is the secret strength of the Christian who walks in victory.

Since we live in a time when there are deceivers we should pay attention to First John. We should remember not to love the world. We should remember to love our brothers and sisters in Christ with a pure heart. We need to remember to confess our sins and receive cleansing and forgiveness from the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us keep in mind the facts of the gospel message: Jesus died for our sins, according to the scriptures. He was buried, and he rose again on the third day.

2:28-29

Jesus shall appear. He will return to earth. John taught in his letter that we need to abide in Christ so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed at his return.

It is crucial to understand what it means to abide in Christ.

Confidence and a lack of guilt springs from a clean conscience. When does the conscience become painful? When you fall into sin. We have a way to deal with the sin problem. We confess our sins to the Lord and he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. **1 John 1:9**.

There is also the experience of daily righteous living. We cannot earn salvation by good works. However, a life filled with God's Spirit produces good works. It is daily life close to the Lord which results in a life of righteousness.

Obedience to the Holy Spirit is abiding in Christ. Committing sin breaks our fellowship with the Lord. Living free from sin and communing with the Lord Jesus is abiding. When he appears we can say to him, "I was just talking to you this morning! I was looking forward to our time this evening in prayer and in bible study, but here you are! Hallelujah, now we can be with each other all the time!"

A man who is born again lives a righteous life. He lives a righteous life because his heavenly Father is righteous. Anyone who continues to live in disobedience and disregard toward God's word shows he is not born again. Even a child is known by his actions. Read **Proverbs 20:11**.

How often do we ponder the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? It is an event which should occupy the mind of the believer every day. The Lord could return at any time. Do we believe this? His return is imminent. There is nothing which could stop him from returning today. Let us live in view of this. Let us meditate on this and cultivate in our life a fear of the Lord. We do not want to be ashamed when he returns. Instead, we want to run out to meet him with our arms wide open.

When is the Lord appearing? We do not know. We have information about the season of his return. The world will be like it was during the time before Noah's flood. Read **Luke 17:26-30**.

The revelation of Jesus Christ happens suddenly and people do not expect it. This speaks to the idea of an imminent return. It happens suddenly and quickly.

We should discipline ourselves to live each day in view of eternity. We should invest ourselves in what will matter a thousand years from now. What will matter in a thousand years?

"Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way; Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." --C.T. Studd.

Chapter 3

3:1

A man who is loved by God and called by God a son is unknown to the world. Those who live in the world do not know a man who is called a son of God. Those who are sons of God do not fit in with the world system and are not understood by those who abide in the world system.

An unbeliever lives according to the world system by living for self first. He loves himself and declares his love for self in word and in action and attitude. His mind is set on his own survival, happiness, provision, and protection. His prize is what he can build and acquire in this world system. This kind of

man does not understand or even like the man whose mind is set on the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience, and denying self.

The son of God is looked on by the world as foolish and weak. This is exactly how the Lord told us it would be, and is exactly what we see in the life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He was crucified in weakness but raised by the power of God.

In the same way the sons of God appear to the world as weak when they deny self and live for God. This son of God does not appear to be concerned about self interest. Instead his mind is up in the clouds thinking about spiritual things. Is he no earthly good? Actually, a spiritual man is a lot of earthly good. Among the sons of God one can find the most practical and useful men anywhere. They are the salt of the earth.

The world cannot understand a son of God because it did not understand the Son of God. They rejected Jesus vehemently and nailed him to a cross. In the same way the world treats those who follow the Savior.

Since the world persecuted the Lord Jesus they also persecute Christians. Read 2 Timothy 3:12.

We are called not only to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ but also to walk in his footsteps and endure trials in a similar fashion as he did. Read **Philippians 1:29**.

When we find people who hate us simply because we are Christians then we need to remember the world hated Christ first. Since they hated the Lord Jesus they will also hate us. Read John 15:18-19.

The world did not know the Lord Jesus and his own people, the nation of Israel, for the most part rejected him as their Messiah. Read **John 1:10-13**.

We are made sons of God when we are born again. We are now in God's family. The world does not understand Christians and they persecute and hate the Christian. This is the way it was ever since our Lord Jesus walked on this earth.

Don't think the path is easy but it is a path which leads to increasing knowledge of our heavenly Father. It leads us from this temporary life into an eternal home with our heavenly Father.

3:2-3

Our heavenly Father calls us his sons. We are sons of God. We have no idea what that means in the future. We will become somebody much different than we are living in this weak human body. We will receive a body like the Lord Jesus. We will receive a resurrected body! I'm looking forward to this. I am tired of this aging body.

When he appears we shall be like him. This speaks of the resurrection of the saints at the rapture. This is what Paul described in **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**.

What a wonderful promise in these scriptures! For the man looking for the appearance of Jesus he experiences a purifying effect on his life. If there is no other reason to preach the return of the Lord Jesus this is it. Preaching about the appearance of the Lord Jesus purifies people. It brings soberness to

our Christian walk. We see how shallow the prosperity message is. That is a shallow message. The prosperity gospel is like moldy crumbs compared to the fresh bread of the return of the Lord.

This is our blessed hope: the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Read **Titus 2:13**.

What will it be like to see the Lord Jesus? After hearing his voice I can see the ocean of change which needs to happen in my life between now and the appearing of the Lord. We can rest assured he will change us. He will make us so we can be in his presence and so we can glorify him forever. Hallelujah, I can't wait!

3:8

John taught that Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. Jesus taught us what the works of the devil are. Read **John 10:10**.

Jesus came to destroy the devil's work of destruction. He came into this world so those dying in their sin could have eternal life. He came to give us life and life more abundantly.

The Lord Jesus reverses the work of the devil. Where the devil stole life from us the Lord Jesus gives us life.

The Lord Jesus restores the wasted years of life. We should not always regret the failure and sin of the past. All of that is under the blood of Jesus.

We do not need to be afraid of the future. Our future in Christ Jesus is secure. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus touched the leper and cleansed him. He opened the eyes of the blind. He caused the crippled to stand up straight and walk. He spoke to the dead and raised him out of the grave.

He is the alpha and the omega. He is the beginning and the end. He is the resurrection and the life. In him we have life! Praise God for his only begotten Son Jesus Christ.

He came and preached the good news to poor people. He walked among us. We touched him and he touched us. One woman grabbed the hem of his robe and was healed. Where he walked demons fled and devils ran away.

He went to Calvary and gave himself as the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. He was mocked, ridiculed, spat on, rejected, scorned, beaten. They made him carry his cross. His head was pierced with a crown of thorns.

Through blood, sweat, tears, and agony he gave his life at Calvary. He is and forever will be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the whole world. He cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

When I think on what the Lord did for me I cannot help but cry. I cry with great sorrow over my life and so much thankfulness in my heart to the Lord Jesus. I am so thankful and glad for him. He is my life now. There is nothing and nobody else but the Lord Jesus.

3:17-18

The spiritual man is a practical man. The Christian is sometimes accused by those who do not know any better of keeping his head in the clouds. A Christian life is more than abstract concepts about love and spirituality. John taught us that a man who loves God will demonstrate love by helping his brother. A brother in need is an opportunity for the Spirit filled Christian. A brother in need is an opportunity to obey God's word and demonstrate love for God and our brother.

John directed his instructions to the brother who had "this world's good". He spoke directly to the Christian who had his needs met. This brother has a home, transportation, food, clothing, and medical care. How can he not help his brother who is in need? Don't forget part of having this world's good may mean particular skills and talents which can be used to help others. Sometimes it is not money but skills and time that is needed to help someone.

A lack of compassion means to harden one's heart against someone in need. If you know someone in your church who is a Christian and is in need then do not look the other way. Find out how you can help. Don't ignore a brother in need.

It feels like this is harder for people today because we are trained by the world system to ignore people. No one pays attention except to their cell phone, computer, and entertainment. We should focus on people around us, not just on feeding ourselves with more information. What are the needs of people around us?

Don't just talk about the Christian life but find ways to put faith into action by helping others. Become sensitive to people in the church who need help.

Chapter 4

4:1-3

Demons are not above using the name of Jesus Christ to deceive Christians. They can and do use the name of Jesus to deceive people into following a false Christ, a false spirit, and a false gospel. Entire religious movements in America were started and maintained by taking the name of Jesus Christ and changing the meaning of his name into something different.

How do we determine if the Jesus people talk about is the same Jesus in the Bible? Do they add or take away from him? Read the New Testament and you find out Jesus Christ is God who came in the flesh and lived among us.

An evil spirit will attempt to deny Jesus was a man or that Jesus was God in the flesh. They will not deny he is real but will minimize him into being only a teacher, prophet, or a healer. They will deny that he is God or they will deny that he was a man. If anyone denies the deity of Jesus or denies the humanity of Jesus then you have a false Jesus.

The word Antichrist simply means "in the place of Christ". The enemy does not deny the Lord Jesus. Instead, the enemy deceives people into trusting a counterfeit Christ. The enemy wants to construct a counterfeit who might be ninety percent like the Christ in the Bible but there will be ten percent which

is a lie. This is how the enemy operates. The enemy patronizes the gospel and Jesus but replaces the real gospel and the real Jesus with a counterfeit. Most people accept a counterfeit Jesus over the real Jesus because a fake Jesus does not challenge their sin. The false Jesus does not convict them of sin. A false Jesus makes people feel good in their sin. He does not rebuke their pride.

We are commanded to "try the spirits". There are many false prophets teaching false gospels, creating a counterfeit Jesus, and building ministries reaching thousands of people with lies. I wonder if there was a time in history when man was so saturated with lies as it is right now?

Testing spirits is not difficult for born again sons of God. Ask discerning questions. Don't take anything at face value. Remember the world is in the power of the wicked. Remember the true Jesus does not encourage a life of sin, pride, and wickedness. If you meet "Christians" who compromise on hot topics such as abortion or homosexuality then beware. If you dig deep enough you will find this person is a false Christian and believes a false Jesus.

The Antichrist spirit is working in the world. It was active during the time of the first apostles. It is active in the current world system. John said this spirit was active then, but indicated something more intense in the future. The Antichrist spirit finds its fulfillment in a man of sin who blasphemes God and takes over the world with lies of peace.

Be diligent to stay in the truth and to abide in God's word continually. We need to stay in prayer, stay in the word, and ask God to correct us and keep us humble. True disciples of Jesus deny self, take up their cross, and follow Him. They do not follow self. They follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't be afraid of demons or evil spirits. Scripture promises us if we submit to God and resist the devil he will flee from us. (**James 4:7**). The word promises us in **1 John 4:4**, "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" We have the victory in the Lord Jesus Christ and are more than conquerors in his name.

4:4-6

Who is the "them" John referred to? If we examine these verses in context we see John pointed at false prophets. John said true Christians are of God and overcome these false prophets. How? Why? Because greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. We overcome the false prophets and the demons behind those false prophets because the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Those who listen to false prophets abide in the world system. They listen to false prophets because they do not have the Holy Spirit. They listen to false prophets because they accept the lie. They live according to the lie and the devil. Everyone who is not a born again Christian is in agreement with the devil.

I know this sounds radical so I will give scriptures to prove this point. Read **Ephesians 2:1-3**. By the way, the "*prince of the power of the air*" referred to is the serpent (devil, Satan, Lucifer). If that is not enough to convince you here's another scripture: **1 John 5:19**.

Jesus touched on this principle of men not being able to hear him because they did not abide in God but were instead living in the devil's system. Read **John 8:43-47**.

I have personally witnessed what Jesus was describing. I have talked to people and told them the gospel truth and they said they did not understand it. Now this complaint of not understanding the gospel or the Bible does not come from a lack of explanation. Basically, someone who refuses to stand under God cannot understand God. They do not understand God's word because they refuse to stand under God's word. They do not submit to God's word because they are unbelievers. They choose the world system instead of God's word. They abide in the world system and cannot understand God's word. Only a man who is of God hears God's word.

4:14-15

Having a biblical framework for thinking instead of man-made systems will exclude ideas like "Christ is only the Savior of the elect". Right here in the Bible it is written that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. All those unbelieving people out there comprise the target of the gospel. The gospel is not just for the elect. This Savior did not just die for a small group of people. He is the Savior of the world.

John said "we have seen". Not only did John see the Lord Jesus. There were other apostles as well who saw the Lord Jesus Christ. They heard his teaching, they watched his miracles, they observed his humility, and they witnessed his obedience to his heavenly Father. They saw him stretch himself out on a cross and allow himself to be nailed to it. They saw him die on that cross. They saw him after he rose from the dead. He met with them, spoke with them, ate food with them. He invited Thomas to touch him and believe in him. They knew for a fact this same Jesus is Lord and He is God. No doubt about it.

Here is an interesting word "whosoever". We've heard this word before in John's gospel. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here are some more "whosoever" verses: **John 4:14, John 11:26, John 12:46, Acts 2:21, Acts 10:43, Romans 10:11-13**. After reading all those verses I hope that no one still believes that Jesus is only the Savior of the elect.

Whosoever will believe in the Son of God who was sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world can and will be saved. It is as simple as believing that Jesus is the Son of God.

When we believe this we automatically reject every man who tells us that Jesus is less than God. We automatically reject every liar who attempts to bring down Jesus to the level of just any other prophet or healer. We reject the lies of society which tell us that Jesus and his church is no different than Islam or Buddhism or any other false, pagan religion. Those who promote these lies are of their father the devil and the works of their father they will do. Satan's most effective weapon to deceive mankind is counterfeit religion.

Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. No one will ever take his place. There will be a man who will try to take his place. He will attempt to take the place of Christ but he will soon be exposed as the beast that he is.

Let us not attempt to put God in a box. Let us realize once and for all that we can believe God's word without systematizing it to death. Let us embrace God's word with humility, believe it, trust in it, rely

on it every single day. This Savior of the world will not fail us. He is returning again soon just like he said that he would.

4:18

The first question which comes to my mind when I read this verse: what kind of "fear" is John referring to? The reason I ask that question is because there are other verses in the Old and New Testament which encourage believers to fear God.

Here is a sample of other scriptures that encourage us to fear God: **Exodus 18:21, Joshua 24:14, Psalms 19:9, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 14:26, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:5, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 5:21, Hebrews 12:28.**

After reading these verses I hope we realize the word "fear" which John used in our text does not mean we should be against the "fear" of God.

I've heard people really twist and mangle this verse and say we should not preach and teach about fearing God. They always quote this verse as a proof text that we should not teach people to fear God. However, if they read their entire Bible and not just this one proof text they would realize how silly their position is.

Of course we are supposed to fear God. The fear of God is the most wonderful thing a man can ever experience in his life. To know the reality and feel the tangible presence of God himself should be a terrifying experience for anyone. Everybody I see in the bible who came close to God fell on their face, passed out, or turned away their face from the Lord. The fear of the Lord is a good thing. It cleanses us. It changes us.

But that was not what John was talking about. John was talking about a tormenting, demonic fear which causes anxiety and stress. This is fear which the enemy tries to put into people so they do not trust in God. John taught us we should realize how much God loves us so we will not give in to the lies of the devil. We need to reject the tormenting fears which the enemy tries to put on believers.

I know there are some areas in my life where I have some irrational fears. I get shaky with heights and also have a problem driving over bridges. These are areas I am determined by God's grace to overcome and not let control me.

Irrational fears are a sign of a lack of trust in God's love. This tormenting, demonic fear hinders us from growing into the man or woman of God we should be.

Remember the exhortation Paul gave to Timothy: **2 Timothy 1:7.**

Chapter 5

5:4-5

One area of victory which Jesus won for us through his death, burial, and resurrection is overcoming the world system.

John already described for us the parts of this world system earlier in chapter 2: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

The outward machinery of the world system is government, business, and society. The majority of Christians find themselves employed and living within one of these realms. There are individuals who do not fit in the world system at all, those who are gifts to the church and labor in the word and in prayer. For the most part, however, Christians live within the world infrastructure of government, business, and society. Even though we live and work within this system we are to resist being infected by the attitude of the world system. The underlying soul of the world system is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

If a Christian will consistently exercise victory over the world system he needs to understand what Christ has done for us. He needs to comprehend that God the Father has placed us into Christ Jesus and united us together with him in death, burial, and resurrection. This unity with Christ deals a death blow to the "self" life, which is the lock on the door of the world system prison. If we are set free from the self life then we also are free from the world system. Some Christians are forgiven for their sins but do not realize their freedom in Christ from walking according to the world system. We are now free to live our life in harmony with the Kingdom of God and not with the world system.

The world system can be characterized as a pyramid with those holding the highest positions, prestige, and power at the very top.

The kingdom of God is the opposite of this. Jesus who is God came into this world as a man and washed the feet of his disciples. He humbled himself and was obedient to the death of the cross. This shows the kingdom of God is exactly opposite of the world system. In the world system Jesus would have been at the top of the pyramid. However, in the kingdom of God the Lord himself took the lowest place and humbled himself. By doing this he showed us the kingdom of God is completely unlike anything we have known in the world system we currently live in.

I remember visiting a prison where I had an opportunity to share my testimony. I have never in my life felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit like I did in that prison. Why would the presence of God be so strong in a church service in a prison? Because the Holy Spirit touches lives when hearts are humble. The Holy Spirit can move in a place where men are not hung up on titles, positions, names, and power. When we humble ourselves and do away with all of the Reverend So-and-So talk then perhaps God will move in our church.

I've only touched on what John described as the "pride of life". This evil is manifest strongly in the area of the world machinery known as "society". Society includes every individual in a city, state, or nation. It also includes those who serve the people in that community. Notice how those who "serve" in the community always have the most prestigious titles: doctors, lawyers, etc. Any person whose career is serving the community usually relies on the power of their name and reputation. These people are the most susceptible to the pride of life.

How do we overcome the world system? By faith in the Son of God. By our unity with the Son of God we are free from the world system. The Holy Spirit helps us see this pride, covetousness, idolatry, and lust. He gives us discernment if we humble ourselves, obey the voice of the Lord, and turn away from

self. We must deny our self, take up our cross, and follow Jesus. By doing this we find the life which God promised us, which is eternal life, a life that lasts forever.

5:12

Here is a succinct and efficient summary of the gospel. He that has Jesus has life. He that does not have Jesus does not have life. There is no in-between when it comes to eternal life or eternal damnation. You are either with Jesus or you are against him. He does not leave room for anyone to be neutral or indifferent. We make a choice for him or against him, one way or another.

This includes those who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. You would be hard pressed to find someone in today's interconnected world but I'm sure there are still people on this planet who have not heard of Jesus and the gospel. If they die in their sins will they be lost and go to hell?

Let me repeat what the bible says: If you have the Son of God you have life. If you do not have the Son of God you do not have life.

Don't think God is unjust in making only one way to be saved. He is just. It would be just if God sent every single man, woman, and child to an eternal lake of fire. We are all fallen, lost, and born in sin. It is God's grace that anyone is saved at all.

If your heart still rebels at God when you hear this then you show your own nature. You are a rebel against God. No matter how much you shake your fist at God you will feel the fist of his justice sooner or later. You can argue and debate but at the end there will only be one thing that matters. Do you have the Lord Jesus? Or did you reject him? That is all that will matter.

It does not matter if you say you do not believe. I can say all day long I don't believe this or that and it does not change facts. There is an objective reality outside of us which does not depend on whether or not we believe.

These are facts. Do you have the Son of God? Or have you rejected him? You will eternally thank God or you will for eternity curse his name. The choice is ours to make.

I have chosen to get totally on the Lord's side. I call on the name of Jesus and trust in him to take away my sins through the blood he shed on the cross at Calvary. I trust in him as my Savior, as my Lord, and as my King. He is my life now and forever.

5:14-15

A man might wonder if God hears his prayers or if God answers his prayers. John gives us a method we can know for sure God hears prayers and answers prayers.

Ask in prayer according to God's will. Let what one asks in prayer be according to who God is.

This requires a man have a relationship with God and know God. How can you know something is God's will unless you know who God is?

We want God to hear our prayers. Is it possible we can pray and God never hears the prayer? Read **Psalms 66:18**. How does a man regard iniquity in his heart? If a man is not willing to deal with known sin in his life and ask for God to cleanse him then there is little hope God hears his prayers. About the only prayer God hears from a man like this is a prayer of repentance and asking God to forgive him. If he asks God to forgive him then he no longer regards iniquity in his heart. To regard iniquity is to hold on to it. He has no intention of letting go of his sin if he regards it in his heart. When he has no intention of laying iniquity down then God does not hear his prayers.

The goal in prayer is to be heard by God. Why spend time praying to God unless you want him to hear your prayers?

Men have various motives for praying. Jesus said some people want to be seen and heard by other men when they pray. If this is the motive then the only one hearing the prayer is the one praying it. Maybe some unfortunate soul in his vicinity will also hear his hot air.

If a man wants God to hear his prayer he will pray according to God's will. One way to learn how to pray according to God's will is to examine prayers in the bible. There are a multitude of prayers in the Bible we can study. One of the most important prayers is the example the Lord Jesus gave his disciples. Read **Luke 11:1-4**. Here we see a pattern for praying according to God's will. Other examples of prayers were those which Paul prayed in his letters. He told people what he prayed for, how he prayed, and how often he prayed.

Prayer is a primary function of the church. We are called to proclaim God's word and to intercede in prayer. We need to pray for the church and also pray for the lost.

The Bible gives specific instructions to never cease praying, never give up, and to engage in prayer as if one is in warfare. Prevailing prayer defeats the work of the devil and is a necessary part of Christian service to God.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Pray that the Lord will send workers into the harvest field to seek and save those who are lost. Pray for government and leaders of our nation, state, and local government. Pray the Lord will give us men who will lead in righteousness and according to biblical principles. We need to pray for revival in the church, for missionaries, pastors, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers in the church. We need to pray that these gifts to the church will be diligent to use their gifts to edify and build up of the church. Pray we will not be conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of our mind in God's word. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.

We need to let our conversation be filled with grace, seasoned with salt. Pray the Lord will set a watch and guard over one's mouth that only what is good and edifying will come out. Let us pray that the word of our mouth and the meditations of our heart will be pleasing to the Lord.

Pray you can bring every thought into captivity and obedience to Christ and cast down every vain imagination. Pray and put on the full armor of God each day. Plead the blood of Jesus over your life, your family, and your neighbors. Pray for your enemies. Pray you will not be overcome by evil by overcome evil by doing what is good. Pray that the peace of Christ Jesus will reign in your heart.

There is a lot to pray for and much we can pray according to God's word. Remember to stay in the word and to stay in prayer always.

5:19

The New Testament teaches about what is called "the world". If we read the New Testament and underline those passages where the world is mentioned we can get a picture in our minds of what "the world" really is.

I heard about this for years and knew about it but only after I received revelation from the Lord did I truly understand the importance of this. There is a clear distinction drawn in scripture between the world and the kingdom of God.

A man is a citizen of the world system because he inherits a sinful nature from his earthly forefather Adam. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden they stopped living according to God's life and started living a self-centered life. They hid from God and tried to cover themselves with vegetation. Already in the beginning we see man's attempt at covering himself with his own efforts.

From these first steps into sin and death man built an entire world system independent from the life of God. Man turned his back on the Tree of Life and instead embraced the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

This world system is built on the foundation of the pride of life, the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eye. This is the soul and foundation of the world system we live in to this current day.

Jesus taught his disciples the kingdom of God is completely opposite of the world system. He told them the Gentiles had titles, positions, and names they called themselves. But in the church we are not to do this. We are not to call people by a title in a system of hierarchy. The hierarchy system of the pyramid is the principle of the world system. Those with the big names are at the top.

In God's kingdom it is opposite from the world system. In God's kingdom those who are the least are the greatest. Those who are great are those who have the smallest names or no name at all. They are servants to everyone else. This is a radical departure from the way the world thinks and operates.

Everyone who abides in the world system is an enemy of God. Those who love the world hate God and are enemies of God. There is no compromise, no middle ground, no in-between ground. Forget about getting on the fence because there is no fence. There is either God's kingdom or the world system.

When men choose to believe the word of the serpent and eat this poisonous fruit he became one in essence, principle, and goal as Satan. This is what is meant by our text today: "the world lieth in wickedness."

If a man is not born again of the Spirit of God he is dead in his trespasses and sins. He is a dead man walking and talking. The "death" the Bible speaks of primarily is spiritual death. Spiritual death is to be separated from God who is eternal life. Jesus said eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom God sent into the world. (**John 17:3**). To be separated from Jesus and the Father is to be dead in sin.

This is repeated by the apostle Paul in **Ephesians 2:1-3**, "*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*"

The outward machinery of the world system is government, business, and society. John's list of spiritual qualities in the world parallel the outward machinery. The lusts of the flesh parallels government. The lusts of the eye parallels business. The pride of life parallels society.

The opposite of the world system is the Kingdom of God: Israel, church, and the kingdom. Also, the roles which parallel these are prophet, priest, and king. Through this we understand and see who God is. The glory of God is reflected through the "three in one" paradigm of Israel, church, and the kingdom. God is reflected in the "three in one" paradigm of prophet, priest, and king. These are all three in one. Now you can understand how the world system is such a counterfeit and rip off of who God is. Government, business, and society is an upside down copy of the prophet, priest, and king. It is also the opposite of Israel, church, and the kingdom. The Lord showed this to me in August 2014 and I've never forgotten this. The more I study the Bible the more I see clearly how all of this fits together. It is so important for us to come out of the world system and live according to the kingdom of God.

Jesus prayed, "*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*" (**John 17:15**).

Through this prayer we understand as Christians we continue working within the framework of the world system. This outward framework is government, business, and society. However, Jesus prayed for us to be kept from "the evil". This evil is the spirit behind the world system. This evil is manifested in the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.

It is important for Christians to pray and ask God for real understanding of these three areas so we can be wise in avoiding temptation. If we look closely we will see the devil employs these three areas when he tempted Eve and also when he tempted the Lord Jesus Christ.

People tend to be tempted more strongly in one area depending on where they work in the world system. If a man serves society in his profession he is most likely to be tempted with the pride of life. If a man works in government he will be sorely tempted with the lusts of the flesh. If someone is a business leader he will be tempted with the lusts of the eye. We are continuously tempted in all of these areas, but wherever we work in the world system greatly affects us. We should learn to overcome in whatever place we are in.

Remember God's promise to us in **1 John 4:4**, "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" Who is "he that is in the world"? The "he" refers to those who are mouthpieces for the evil spirit. We have overcome them because the Holy Spirit lives within us. The "he" is the spirit of Antichrist, or the devil.

The Lord makes a way for us to escape temptation. Read **1 Corinthians 10:13**. Also, a very simple scripture to keep in mind when engaged in spiritual warfare is **James 4:7**, "*Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*"

Second John

Chapter 1

1:7

John repeats what he said in 1 John. Anyone who adds to the Lord Jesus or takes anything away from him is a deceiver and an Antichrist. People attempt in different ways to deny the humanity or the deity of the Lord Jesus. Both denials lead to error and deception. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is the God Man.

There are many deceivers. There are too many deceivers to keep up with. I see ministries who do their best to list and keep up with cults and false religions. I understand the purpose of what they are attempting but I think there is a better method to help people with discernment. I think the best way to arm people against deceivers is to saturate ourselves with the truth.

One scripture which points to this is **2 Thessalonians 2:10**. Here we see the way to avoid deception is to receive the love of the truth. It is not enough to acknowledge the truth. We must love the truth.

We must love the truth more than we love ourselves. The reason we must love the truth intensely like this is because the truth condemns our sinfulness. We are sinful by nature and by birth. The truth condemns us. We must take the side of the truth against ourselves. The only way to do this is to receive the love of the truth. We must love the truth even when it strikes us down. This is impossible unless God's grace moves in the heart of the believer.

We can pray and ask God to give us this love of the truth. I would make this a priority in our prayers to God. Ask the Lord to help us to love the truth more than we love ourselves. Our ability to escape deception and delusion depend upon this love of the truth.

I've known people who acknowledge the truth and make a profession of faith. As I walk alongside them for awhile, however, I notice when the truth convicts them they take their own side. They defend themselves against the truth. When I see this I know the person does not love the truth. They give lip service to the truth but they do not love the truth. Only a man who humbles himself when the truth strikes him truly loves the truth.

Who is the truth? Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. (**John 14:6**). He is truth. The word he speaks is spirit and life. (**John 6:63**). Jesus Christ himself is truth. When he speaks the words which come from him are truth. He is absolute truth.

I find the conversation Jesus had with Pilate interesting within the context of what we are looking at here. Read **John 18:37-38**.

Everyone who is of the truth hears the voice of the Lord. Do we want to hear the voice of God? Then get completely on the Lord's side. Ask him to give us a love of the truth so even when we are condemned by the truth we still take the side of truth.

This is a decision we make. Will we abide in the truth? Will we abide in the truth when the entire world says the truth is a lie and the lie is the truth? That is what is happening right now. Men call what is evil good and what is good they call evil. What side will we take? Will we receive a love of the truth and escape these deceivers? If we receive the love of the truth then the Holy Spirit lives in us. He is the Spirit of truth and he enables us to discern the lie of the devil.

If anyone denies Jesus Christ came in the flesh he is a deceiver and an Antichrist.

1:8

When John teaches us to look to ourselves he is asking us to be careful what we believe and embrace.

There were people in John's day, and in our day, who attempt to teach Jesus is not fully human or he did not actually come in the flesh.

If someone accepts this false teaching they are set up for another lie. This lie is that because Jesus did not come in the flesh the first time then maybe he isn't coming in the flesh to the earth a second time.

These lies construct a framework of deception in the minds of people and lead them to accept the Antichrist. However, the Bible teaches us that in the same way Jesus ascended into heaven he will return again. Read **Acts 1:9-11**.

The prophet Zechariah also describes a day when the Lord himself will set his feet on the earth. Read **Zechariah 14:4**.

The devil does not want mankind to believe that Jesus Christ will return to this earth in the flesh. Instead, the enemy wants mankind to believe in a man with a "Christ" spirit. This is the Antichrist.

John gave a sobering reason why we should be diligent to guard ourselves against deception. Remember John was writing this letter to Christians and he warned of the possibility of losing a reward. It is John's desire in writing this that Christians receive a full reward.

The idea of receiving rewards when the Lord Jesus returns was also mentioned by Paul in his letters. Read **2 Timothy 4:7-8**. Paul gave a description of his reward as a "crown of righteousness". It would be a good idea to do a word study of "reward" in the New Testament.

Paul also mentioned the possibility of losing our reward in his letter to the Colossians. Read Colossians 2:18.

As in John's case Paul warned us of deceivers who cause us to lose a reward from the Lord Jesus. It is therefore of paramount importance that we guard what the Lord Jesus gave to us.

Here are some more scriptural exhortations along these same lines: **Revelation 3:11, 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Proverbs 4:23**.

1:9-11

The context of John's letter to the elect lady is to help protect the church from deceivers who attempt to take advantage of the hospitality of the church in order to further their goals.

John said there are many deceivers which are in the world. If there were many deceivers in John's day I cannot imagine how many deceivers we have now. There are more deceivers in the world than can be counted.

The way to discern deception is to have a love for God's truth. Not all "truth" is God's truth. There is also a wicked reasoning, logic, and philosophy which the world has. This logic of the devil was promoted by a group known as "Gnostics". These were the men John protected the church from. They denied the doctrine of Christ. We still have these deceivers in the world today promoting the same lies over and over.

What is the doctrine of Christ? From reading the letters of John I have a list of items I think belong in the doctrine of Christ:

Jesus is God and came into this world as a man. He is fully God and fully man. He is God who came in the flesh.

Anyone who lives a life of sin is not a child of God.

Anyone who hates his brother in Christ is not a child of God.

Our profession of faith results in a life of showing good practical compassion to others.

A Christian will continue to abide in the doctrine of Christ.

God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons in one God.

In my comments I underline the importance that God is three in one and it is my opinion if someone denies this they are not Christian. I believe firmly a true Spirit filled Christian knows God is three in one. A true Christian knows God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I underline this because of the specific revelation God gave me. All the items listed here continually come under attack by deceivers in one way or another.

From John we learn the importance of the doctrine of Christ. If someone does not abide in the doctrine of Christ then we do not show them hospitality and we do not bid them Godspeed. I take this to mean we do not give them practical help as this is assisting people in a false ministry.

Third John

Chapter 1

1:2

This is one of those scriptures which deceivers and false prophets like to abuse. It is ironic that the letters which John wrote are so abused by those who are the ones John warned us about.

If I never read the Bible and started reading from the book of Matthew in the New Testament and just kept reading until I got to this verse I would never think the word "prosper" referred to money or finances. After I read what Jesus said regarding rich men and what Paul said about the love of money I would never assume the word "prosperity" in this verse referred to money or finances. Those who do make that assumption show that covetousness is the attitude in their heart which they employ to interpret scripture.

What is prosperity for a Spirit filled Christian? Prosperity is a word which describes fruitfulness in the life of the Christian. What does a fruitful Christian life look like? Paul the apostle shows us in Galatians. Read **Galatians 5:22-23**.

A Christian who prospers looks like what Paul described. His life is filled with love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. This is a life of prosperity. This is a life of true prosperity and fruitfulness in the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not about money or finances. That is an invention of the world system. Those who emphasize money in their preaching are in dangerous waters. When Jesus spoke about rich people and money it was all negative. He condemned men who were covetous and taught us that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Paul followed this up in his letters, teaching us that the love of money is the root of all evil. Why is the love of money the root of evil? Because it is idolatry. It is making one's self independent from God. It is the opposite of trusting in God day by day for our daily bread.

The scripture teaches us that those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many hurtful lusts which drown men in perdition. Do we think we are so special that we can desire money and somehow not be ensnared? Do we think we are so spiritually strong we can overcome the temptation which money brings? If a man thinks he is spiritually strong it is because his heart is filled with pride and false teaching. Read **1 Timothy 6:6-11**.

It would be a good idea to memorize these scriptures if one is tempted toward a desire for riches and money. Memorize these scriptures and meditate upon it. May God fill us with a fear of ever desiring a lot of money. Let us keep ourselves free from idolatry and the love of money. We cannot serve God and Mammon. (**1 John 5:21, Matthew 6:24**).

Don't be deceived into thinking that an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ would promote a doctrine in the church that Christians should prosper financially. This is a doctrine of demons which we see multiplied

in the modern church like leaven. There is no doubt in my mind that we are living in the last days and the church is filled with men teaching doctrines of demons. Read **1 Timothy 4:1**.

It was John's purpose in writing these letters to warn the church about deceivers. It is just like the enemy to take the letters intended to protect the church and twist those scriptures to deceive Christians in the church. That is just like the enemy to do something like that.

Let us pray for true discernment. Let us pray we may receive the love of the truth so we will not be deceived by false prophets and false gospels. Let us stay in the word and stay in prayer daily.

1:7-8

This makes me wonder about ministries which I served under in the past who beg for money in front of Wal-Mart or who go to civic groups or door to door to raise money for their ministries. They justify this by saying their ministry is doing a public service and the whole community should support it.

After reading this scripture I doubt that fund raising from unbelievers is a scriptural way to support a church or a ministry.

Where does this money go to for these ministries? I have a lot of sad stories I could tell from working on the inside of these ministries but it is pointless and unproductive to write about it. I just pray the Lord gives me enough discernment to avoid these kind of churches and ministries in the future.

This again goes back to what is the goal of a church or ministry. Is it all about raising money, constructing buildings, and expanding the physical infrastructure? Or, is the goal of the church or ministry publishing the name of Jesus Christ? Those who say you can do both at the same time forget what the Lord taught us: You cannot serve the Lord and money at the same time.

What should our goal be? The Lord Jesus gave us the goal himself. Read **Matthew 28:19-20**. This promise of the Lord going with us reminds me of another promise. Read **Hebrews 13:5**. Thank you Lord for providing all of our needs.

1:9-10

Already in the early church there were men like Diotrephes who exerted personal authority and elevated themselves with positions. No doubt he had plans to start a school in his own name and give out certificates and titles to his students. This is how the Pharisees and religious leaders among the Jews operated. It is how religion operates to this day. People are promoted to positions with titles and given man-made authority.

However, authority from God comes simply by a man who speaks the truth. A man who is filled with the doctrine of Christ, who walks the truth, and speaks the truth, is the man with authority from God. Men can give out diplomas, certificates, and titles, but God gives authority to a man who is an overcomer in Christ Jesus.

John was disturbed that Christian missionaries were not given hospitality or help through this church as a result of this one man Diotrephes. John taught us to help support Christians who serve in ministry. It is our duty to show hospitality to those who take no help from unbelievers but rely instead upon

Christians to help support their ministry work. Why would a Christian want to accept any money from unbelievers? The word teaches us not to make any agreements with unbelievers. (**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**).

Those who love position and prestige follow in the footsteps of the devil. This is the chief characteristic of Satan: pride. Read **Isaiah 14:14**. This is in stark contrast to the Lord Jesus Christ. Read **Philippians 2:5-8**.

This Diotrephes was controlled by the pride of life. See what the results of this are in the church? He rejects those who are true ministers of the gospel and cast out people in the church who support those true ministers of the gospel.

I am against the church setting up positions, titles, or creating a hierarchical system of control like the world system does. It is human nature to elevate men, though, and so it is probably impossible to change this until the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

The futility of trying to change the modern church, however, will not stop me from proclaiming the truth.

I will continue to speak against pyramid structures, position, prestige, and the power of men.

May God's Kingdom come! May His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Mike Kines
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